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A Time like this demands Strong Minds, Great Hearts, True Faith and Ready Hands."

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Home and School Education.

Aware of the prevailing idea that the wisdom pertaining to the rearing of children is a sort of God-given faculty that comes with parentage and is withheld from other mortals, I shall expect to have considerable opposition to the statement that I shall make, which I believe to be true, and which I shall attempt to prove, viz., that people who are not parents are better fitted in many respects to care for and educate children than the parents themselves.

Objection will be made to this statement on the ground that nature itself provides that the child coming into the world in a perfectly helpless state should be cared for by its parents until it reaches an age when it can care for itself.

But at about two years of age a noticeable change takes place in the promising infant. His five senses have developed and he is beginning to get his bearings. He has discovered that there is a larger sphere for his activity than the four walls of the nursery. He has found out what his legs are for and has an uncontrolable desire to use them in exploring the outside world. He cries to go out doors. He runs away so persistently that for a year or two, unless he is kept in close confinement, some one must run after him from three to twenty times a day.

These new traits are but outward manifestations of the changes taking place in his mind as it enters upon its first great period of growth. He seems to think, in his vague, infantile way, that he has a right to see and get acquainted with things away from home.

It is at this point in the child's career that other influences than that of the parents can come into his life with a beneficial result. It is a critical period and many parents allow misguided affection to interfere with the child's best development. It is surprising how men and women of good judgment and common sense under ordinary circumstances will be so blinded by love of their offspring as to act in the most senseless and foolish manner when dealing with them.

Mothers, especially, are given to overlooking and minimizing evil tendencies which, if left to themselves, often grow with the child's growth and eventually lead to his ruin. For this reason it is best for the child, for his parents, and for society, that a large part of the work of education be done outside the home.

Do not think I advocate the plan of taking children from the home at a tender age and placing them under the care of strangers. Such a scheme would be inhuman, unnatural and ruinous. The home influence is one of the most necessary factors in the evolution of the child. It is better for children to be raised in poor homes—even homes where poverty and squalor abound—than to grow up in the best regulated asylum in the land. What I do advocate is that the home training should be supplemented by skilled instructors, who are not blinded by love and influenced by family prejudice.

Why were schools established at the dawn of civilization and why have they continued to grow in importance as civilization advanced? Simply because society saw that parents were not to be trusted with the education of their children and, for its own protection, provided a plan by which they could be educated by others.

It may be said that this is only true of ignorant parents, who are unable to give their children the instruction necessary to make them useful members of society, but it is also a general truth which may be applied to all classes.

Parents of culture and refinement frequently attempt to educate their children at home, thinking to shield them from the contaminating influence of the school, but the results are nearly always unsatisfactory.

Children so educated are usually shy and unsympathetic with the outside world, with an abnormal amount of family pride, and with a tendency to the same defects of mind and body noticed in children whose parents are near relatives.

In an ideal system of public education provision would be made for the instruction of children from the time they are two years old until they enter upon the duties of life.

I do not mean to say that they should be taught to read and write and cipher at that age, but instruction they should have and that of the highest order.

It is between the ages of two and seven that the standards of right and wrong and the guiding principles of life are being formed.

Educators are beginning to recognize the fact that it is during this formative period that the most effective work can be done to fit the child for a useful and honorable life.

The kindergarten is rapidly coming to be a part of the public school system. It should be maintained in connection with every public school in the land, as much or more care should be taken in the selection and qualification of its teachers as is exercised in regard to high school teachers, and its course should provide for the instruction of children from two to seven years of age.

While attaching great importance to that part of the school, the responsibility of the parents must not be overlooked. There is a feeling on the part of a large number of people that, inasmuch as the schools are maintained for the purpose of educating the young and are liberally supported by public money, the whole task of training children for useful lives may be left to them.

"I pay a tax to support the school, therefore, I expect the school to educate my child," says the practical business man.

This could be said with more reason if the child were placed under the influence of the school at the time his mental growth begins, but under the present regime, where he enters school after his habits have, to a great extent, become fixed, the expectation is seen not to be well founded.

The task is so mighty that all influences, beginning as soon as the mind is capable of receiving an impression, should be combined to be on the side of developing a strong and durable character.

Both home and school influences being necessary to bring about the desired results in the child's development, it is essential that they work in harmony. They should not be independent, but interdependent forces. Perfect understanding and sympathy should exist between parents and teachers. They should hold frequent consultations concerning the work in hand, and each should feel free to tell the other what has been found to help or hinder the child's progress.

There has been, for various reasons, a great chasm created between the home and the school. The chasm has kept growing wider and wider. Now often the parents do not visit the teacher unless they visit the school, and this is but rarely done. I do not believe that more than five per cent of the parents visit the school once a term, unless it is at closing exercises. It does not take a philosopher to see that good results cannot be obtained until this chasm is closed up. The home needs the teacher and he belongs to the home. His aim should be to advance the interests of the home.

As matters stand now the teacher does not know enough of the home, and the home does not know enough of the teacher. Instead of working together in perfect accord, there is not unfrequently actual hostility between them, teachers and parents looking upon each other with suspicion or tolerating each other as a necessary evil.

Who, or what, is to blame for this deplorable state of affairs is hard to determine.

Both parents and teachers are beginning to feel the great need of co-operative effort in education.

How shall we correlate the home and the school is coming to be the burning question of the hour. Co-operation implies the working together of two or more forces towards a common end. In this work of education here are the two great forces, the home and the school, each with its prime controller, the parent and the teacher, and surely there is the common end.

How, then, may the working together be accomplished?

Three things must be taken into consideration:

1. The duty of the parent to the school.

2. The duty of the teacher to the home.

3. The duty of both to the child.

It is the right and the duty of parents to know the teachers who have so large a share in the training of their children. They should know something of their motives, their thoughts, their character, their plans and methods. They should sympathize with them in the difficult work they have on hand. When they make mistakes they should call their attention to them in a kindly way, instead of discussing their failings before the children or their neighbors.

It is the duty of parents to know something of the modern methods of education: to study the new ideas that are stirring the pedagogical world, the kindergarten, manual training, individual development, and all the grea educational questions. They should demand healthful environments and ennobling surroundings in the schools, and should see to it that these are supplied.

In the next place, teachers have a part in bringing about this co-operation. They have a right to know the parents of their pupils and should make an effort to get acquainted with them. They must put themselves in sympathy with the parents, understand something of the home environment, recognize the hope, the ambition, the love, that is centered in each little being under their charge.

In the third place, the duty of both to the child:

First, and chiefly—Both parents and teachers owe it to the child to study him, to know his individuality, to understand his needs and limitations, and to furnish him the best opportunity to develop the highest that is in him. They owe it to the child to cultivate their own powers, for "self-culture and child-nurture go hand in hand." They should unite all their forces to discover what is the right training and then bring together their best efforts to accomplish it.

There is a belief common among American parents that their children will eventually turn out well anyhow, that good blood and inherent common sense will tell in the end, no matter if they are a little wild and wayward when growing up. This is a dangerous belief, and may account for the fact that many a bright boy, who came from a good family and who started out in life with every promise of a useful and respectable career, is now closing it in a felon's cell.

Every individual starts upon an upward or downward course in childhood. Bad habits are nearly always formed before maturity is reached.

These are not abstract questions, to be considered by the scholar and the philosopher. They are the vital, burning questions of the hour, and concern everyone who has the interests of mankind at heart. They concern the people of Kinsley as well as the people of New York.

How many boys are loafing around the streets of our town to-night, swearing, lying, using vulgar language and learning to gamble, cheat and steal?

It costs much less time and money to train a child and start him out in the right way than it does to care for the mature criminal. May the day soon come when this fact is universally recognized, and the vast sums of money now used to protect society from crime be spent in educating youth in the right ways of living. L. R. CLARK.

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